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## ABSTRACT

Food can both interest students in a foreign culture and motivate them to broaden their interests. Cooking with students can take many forms. The students can cook in class if adequate preparations are made and permission is granted. Students can contribute toward the purchase of food for snacks and meals, and the cost can be kept to the price of a school lunch. The class can exchange rooms with a home economics class for a day or two. Banquets can also be cooked at home, with careful menu planning, and can be prepared either in one home or potluck style and brought to the meal site. A bake sale can be used to raise money quickly or regularly. This can take the form of an after-school sale or sale by order, such as a holiday "buche de Noel" sale, and items can be prepared individually by students or in a group, either in a home or at school. Recipes can be found in most language teachers' cookbook collections, and can usually be adjusted to be appropriate for the group. Recipes are provided for napoleons, buche de Noel, tortillas, churros, and torta de chocolate. (MSE)

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## CLASS CUISINE: FOOD IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS

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Food is one of the best motivators in the world! We all know the way to a man's heart; food is also a way to interest high school students in foreign culture and to motivate them to broaden their horizons. Several examples illustrate this.

- 1 My first year students eagerly learn the lesson when they know that as soon as class members can use "me gustan" or "¿te gustan?" in talking about churros, we will be preparing these treats in class.
- 2 Research on French Christmas customs is done eagerly when the committee is planning the seven-course meal they will cook and eat in December.
- 3 When a current student is serving as a peer advisor, the in-class cooking is usually mentioned. (The public relations value of cooking in class can be very important!)
- 4 Former students who meet me years later say, "remember when..." and often mention something about food.

Cooking with students takes many forms. Students can prepare many foods in class. First year Spanish students, for example, make "churros y chocolate" or tacos, and second year Spanish students cook a Mexican meal in school. French students make French pastry, usually cream puffs, éclairs, or Napoléons. Students can prepare foods at home. French students, for example, vote every year in favor of a formal Christmas banquet, prepared and eaten in someone's home. In the spring we have an evening international Potluck at school with entertainment and awards for French, Spanish, and Latin students and their families. We also use cooking as a money-maker and as a planned activity at the Ohio University Language Fair.

The following sections describe some activities, experiences and suggestions for using food in the foreign language class.

### Cooking in class

If you decide, as I do, to use food during class, you will have to arrange for permission, cost, purchase of groceries, safety for students who are cooking, and, of course, cleanup afterwards.

Be sure to talk to someone first. The assistant principal, the janitor, or the Home Economics teachers are likely people to consult about your plans. Start with the person most likely to be

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supportive of your efforts. You might want to invite the principal to drop in and have a snack on the day you prepare tacos so that he or she can see that all is going well. You know your school and what is possible. If the floors are old, oiled, and wooden, you should consider either a non-cooked snack (filling cream puffs, assembling tacos with the meat sauce cooked elsewhere first) or exchanging classrooms with the home-ec teacher for the class period. Most schools now have heavy-duty wiring, and flame-proof construction; if yours does, you can use your electric fry-pan or hot plate right on your desk.

For snacks or for meals, I collect money from students in advance. Churros and chocolate cost about \$.25 per student; tacos are about \$.50. The cost of French pastry varies according to the size we serve, usually \$.25 to \$.50. I price the groceries in advance, divide the cost, and start collecting money about a week before the date we prepare and eat the food. If students cannot pay, I let them write me an IOU, but I don't always collect it.

We try to keep our second-year Mexican meal at about the price of the school lunch. (Some years, the students vote to pay more, and to include shrimp or other more expensive foods.) The first time I tried a whole meal, I selected the menu myself, but now that I am comfortable with the confusion of several groups of students cooking at once, I let them look over my cookbooks to decide what they will try.

We exchange classrooms with the home-ec teacher for two days in a row for the Mexican meal. During the week before, we decide who, in groups of two or three, will cook which dish. When I prepare the recipes on the ditto master, I indicate what to prepare the first day and what must be done at the last minute. When we arrive at the home-ec classroom, there is always some confusion, but soon everyone has the groceries needed and cooking is underway. There are sometimes problems: once, for example, some cooks dumped all the ingredients into the bowl at once instead of following the steps of the dessert recipe. We rescue disasters if possible--in that case, we had a very dry and tough cake to eat the next day, but we ate it anyway, with much joking.

### Cooking in homes

Cooking a banquet in a home means careful menu planning, particularly for foods that need to go into the oven. Your student food committee must be aware that you cannot bake two things at once if there isn't room, or if they require different temperatures. We decide on the entrée first, and plan around that.

I have never decided whether it is more work to have our French dinner at someone else's house or at my own. If it is elsewhere, I check with the host mother in advance about her kitchen, particularly about large utensils. I usually need to bring

some from home. Sometimes it is necessary to lend dishes and chairs as well. At my own house, I have enough chairs and some big pots and pans, so I can serve up to about 24 without borrowing more. When we have the Christmas Party chez moi, however, I must clean house before and afterwards, as well as assemble the groceries we will need. There is always the additional hazard of practical jokes such as discovering short-sheets or rice in one's bed at the end of a very long evening! I assume that a practical joke is a compliment, a tribute to one's sense of humor.

Preparing big meals potluck style is the easiest on the teacher. Students take home their recipes, prepare them there, and then all share the meal at school or in someone's home.

### Money-making with food

To make a modest amount of money quickly, a bake sale is a sure winner. We have monthly cream puff sales after school, and each nets about \$15 for the French Club treasury. Students bake shells at home; it takes fifteen minutes of class time to fill them and sprinkle the top with powdered sugar. Each cream puff sells for \$.25 when we make twelve to the four-egg recipe; or for \$.50 when we make jumbo puffs at six or eight to the four-egg recipe. We set up the table in the entry hall, and students buy eagerly on their way to the bus.

At the Ohio University Language Fair, we set up a Patisserie where we sell a variety of pastries baked at a party the night before. Favorites include Napoléons, éclairs, and Galettes aux pommes. Prices are around \$.50 each.

One December we decided to sell Buches de Noel. We charged \$3.50 and took orders in advance. We met after school in the home-ec kitchen and, assembly-line style, turned out 80 cakes to fill our orders. Sixteen students and I worked from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. It took twice as long as we thought it would, and we were truly weary at the end of the evening. The next day, students delivered the cakes to those who had placed orders with us, and we cleared about \$120.

### Cookbooks

You probably have some cookbooks on your shelf now that relate to the language or languages you teach. In addition to your own cookbook collection, you will want to check the nearest library where there are probably many books available about food in target language countries. Students love to look through cookbooks!

You will need to adjust some of the recipes. First, many foreign books give recipe ingredients in grams and ounces that need to be converted before the recipes are typed for students to

use. Additionally, if the recipe contains alcoholic beverages you must substitute other liquids when you are working with students. State school law is very clear on this. Good substitutes are tea, cider, tomato juice, or lemon and water, according to what you are cooking. Coc au vin prepared with water and a tablespoon of lemon juice instead of wine is not the same, of course, but it will still taste very good. Finally, you may need to double or triple the recipe. Be conservative. I recommend preparing less than enough instead of too much.

Do not take it personally if students taste your favorite food and push it aside--or refuse to taste it. Teenage food preferences are fickle at best, and peer pressure can have an influence. I adjust recipes as necessary, such as omitting capers from steak tartare, for example. I try for a blend of authentic cuisine and acceptable taste.

For Spanish students, my favorite reference is the Sunset Mexican Cook Book (1). Another excellent cookbook available in paperback is Barbara Hansen's Mexican Cookery (2). For French students, I recommend Jacques Pepin's La Technique (3), and the Sunset French Cook Book (4). Any books by Julia Child or any LaRousse cookbooks will add variety to what you consider preparing; they may, however, be too complicated for the relatively inexperienced teenagers to use.

Graham Kerr, the Galloping Gourmet of TV fame, had a religious experience that changed his cooking style, eliminating all use of alcohol. His book, The New Seasoning (5), offers practical suggestions for altering traditional recipes so that you can use them with school groups.

### Recipes

In the concluding section are several of my own recipes for class cuisine. These are mostly adaptations of standard recipes, changed and tested over the years to meet the tastes of students and to be simple and successful. Bon appetit!

### Napoléons in School

Crusts Prepare at home the night before or in the home-ec lab at school. You will bake rectangles for top and bottom crusts on cookie sheets (9" x 18" or any convenient size).

Authentic: Use any good French cookbook and make rough puff paste, turning and chilling dough as directed. Roll into two rectangles and bake.

Easy (tastes like the real thing): Buy refrigerated Crescent Roll dough at your grocery store. You will need two packages, one for

the top and one for the bottom crust. Unroll the dough but do not separate into triangles. Just bake flat in a large rectangle.

Filling: Authentic: Make a cooked cream filling with at least six eggs and real cream.

Easy: Mix 1 cup milk (only) and 1 package dry instant French vanilla pudding. When they are mixed, immediately add 1 small carton Cool-Whip already whipped.

Easiest: Use canned pudding (vanilla).

Frosting the tops: To make a shiny white icing, separate one egg. Put the white into a large bowl and whip with a fork or whisk until foamy. Sift 3 cups powdered sugar into the bowl on top of the egg white. Add water a few teaspoons at a time to make a thin frosting. This will coat two tops made from crescent roll dough.

Add a few tablespoons of powdered sugar to about one-fourth cup chocolate syrup to make a thin frosting that will pour from the tip of a spoon.

Frost the top crust with the white icing. Then make parallel lines across by dripping chocolate from the tip of a spoon (Fig 1). While both icings are still soft, draw the tip of a knife down the middle and up the two sides to make the traditional design (Fig 2).

Allow to set while you clean up the work area. Give everyone a paper napkin, cut into enough pieces for everyone in the class to have some, serve your pastry, and enjoy! When we sell Napoléons at bake sales, we cut twelve from this size recipe.

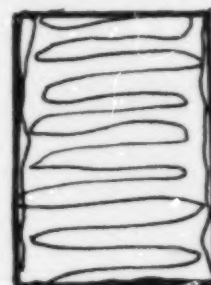


Figure 1

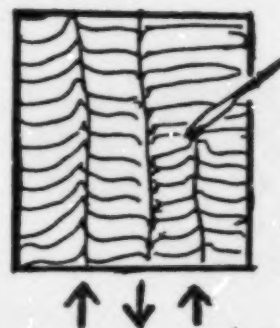


Figure 2

### Buche de Noel

#### French Yule Log Cake

1. Prepare jelly-roll pan by lining it with aluminum foil. Then grease and flour the foil.
2. Prepare a linen towel by sprinkling with about 2 Tablespoons powdered sugar (use a small strainer). You will need this to roll the hot cake.

## 3. Have ingredients ready.

For largest pan: 11" x 18"

1  $\frac{1}{3}$  C flour  
 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. baking powder  
 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt  
 4 large eggs  
 1  $\frac{1}{3}$  C sugar  
 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  C water  
 1  $\frac{1}{3}$  tsp. vanilla

For regular pan: 10" x 15"

1 C flour  
 1 tsp baking powder  
 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt  
 3 large eggs  
 1 C sugar  
 1  $\frac{1}{3}$  C water  
 1 tsp. vanilla

4. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
5. Beat eggs in small mixer bowl until very thick and lemon colored, about 5 minutes at high speed. Do not underbeat.
6. Pour beaten eggs into larger bowl. Gradually beat in sugar. Then blend in water and vanilla on low speed.
7. Slowly mix in dry ingredients at low speed just until batter is smooth. Pour into prepared pan.
8. Bake 12-15 minutes at 357 .
9. Remove from oven. Loosen edges. Immediately turn upside down on prepared towel. Carefully remove foil. Roll up towel and cake from the narrow end (Fig 1). Cool.
10. Prepare icing:  
Creamy cocoa icing: Sift together 2  $\frac{2}{3}$  cups sifted powdered sugar and  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cocoa. Add  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup soft butter or oleo and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Add 3 Tablespoons hot water. Stir until smooth. Add more water a few drops at a time until desired spreading consistency.
11. Unroll. Spread lightly with frosting. Remove towel and re-roll.
12. Slice a diagonal 2"-3" piece from one end (Fig 2.) Place on side of roll with toothpicks (Fig 3). Use remaining frosting as "bark" and draw lines with a fork or knife point. Do not frost ends of yule log (Fig 4).

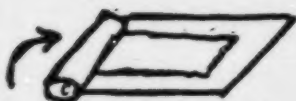


Figure 1

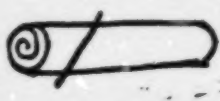


Figure 2

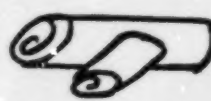


Figure 3

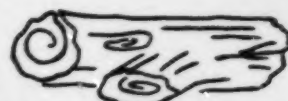


Figure 4

### Tortillas

2 cups Masa Harina  
1 cup water

Combine Masa Harina and water, knead to blend well. If necessary, add a little more water to hold dough together. Shape into 12 balls. Just before patting or rolling out, dust ball with more Masa Harina (keeps it from sticking).

To make tortillas: 1) pat out into 6-inch diameter circles between palms; OR 2) press between sheets of Saran wrap, using a clear Pyrex pie plate (so that you can see what you are doing) to press down into a circle; OR 3) use a tortilla press. Cover bottom of press with Saran wrap, place ball of dough in center, cover with another sheet of Saran wrap. Shut press. Open press and remove tortilla. (Saran wrap may be reused.)

Bake tortillas on hot, lightly greased griddle until lightly browned, a minute or two per side. When "lightly freckled," wrap in a towel, separated with waxed paper or in foil or plastic, and refrigerate until ready to use.

Tostaditos (Fritos): Cut or tear each tortilla into about 6 wedges. Fry in about 1/2" hot oil until crisp, about 3 minutes. Drain on paper towels. Serve as is, or use to dip into refried beans or other dip.

### Churros

In a two-quart saucepan, bring 1 cup water and 1/2 cup butter or margarine to a boil. Add 1 cup flour all at once and beat mixture briskly until it sticks together and forms a ball (about 45 seconds). Remove from heat and allow to cool about 5 minutes. Add 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg or cinnamon. Add 4 eggs one at a time, beating until smooth each time. Dough may be used immediately or refrigerated until needed, up to about 8 hours.

Spoon dough into a pastry bag fitted with a star tip. Squeeze directly into hot oil (370°, 1" deep in a 10" skillet) making churros about 6" long. Cook 3 or 4 at a time until a deep golden brown; turn occasionally. Drain over skillet, then on paper towels. Sprinkle with a cinnamon-sugar mixture and serve immediately.

If you do not have a pastry bag, place dough in a heavy plastic bag such as a Ziplock storage bag. Cut the tip off one of the bottom corners, and squeeze out the strips of dough. Be sure the plastic bag does not touch the hot fat.

### Torta de Chocolate

This rolled cake was the dessert one day at my favorite boarding house in Mexico City. It was rich and delicious, and I asked the cook how she made it. She was delighted with my appreciation, but she used no recipe. She showed me the ingredients, however, and the approximate measures. Back in Ohio, I experimented until I developed this recipe, a close match for the cake Teresita makes in Mexico.

1. Prepare a jellyroll pan by greasing and flouring it. Prepare a kitchen towel slightly larger than the jellyroll pan by laying the towel on the countertop and sprinkling it with cocoa (use a small strainer, about 2 Tablespoons cocoa).
2. Sift together 1 cup flour, 1/4 cup cocoa, 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, 1 tsp. baking powder, and 1/4 tsp. salt. Set aside.
3. Beat 3 eggs in small mixer bowl until very thick and lemon-colored (about 5 minutes with electric mixer). Pour eggs into larger mixer bowl. Gradually add 1 cup sugar. Blend in 1/3 cup water and 1 tsp. vanilla. Slowly mix in prepared dry ingredients at low speed, just until batter is smooth.
4. Pour into prepared pan and bake at 375 for 12-15 minutes until top springs back when lightly touched.
5. Remove, loosen edges and immediately turn upside down on the towel. Loosen with spatula if cake sticks. If cake tears, match the pieces together on the towel. While cake is still hot, roll cake and towel together from the narrow end. Cool.
6. Prepare filling-frosting while cake is cooling. Mix 1/4 cup cocoa, 2 Tablespoons cornstarch, 1 cup sugar, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/8 tsp. salt in a heavy saucepan. Add 1 cup milk. Cook until thick, stirring often. Remove from heat. Add 1 Tablespoon butter and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Cool somewhat before spreading. Spread about 2/3 of mixture on unrolled cake, roll up, and spread the remaining 1/3 cup on top and sides.
7. Cut into slices and serve. Makes about 10 portions of very rich dessert. It will hold its shape better if you chill it well before slicing.

#### Notes

- 1 Marjorie Roy Piper, ed., Sunset Mexican Cook Book, Menlo Park, CA: Lane Books, 1973.
- 2 Barbara Hansen, Mexican Cookery, New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1981.
- 3 Jacques Pepin, La Technique, New York: Pocket Books, Wallaby printing, 1978.
- 4 J. A. DeVecchio and J. A. Gaulke, eds., Sunset French Cook Book, Menlo Park, CA: Lane Books, 1976.
- 5 Graham Kerr, The New Seasoning, New York: Pocket Books, 1977.